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TO Department of State

EO 11652: XGDS 2

TAGS: PINS, GT

FROM Amembassy GUATEMALA

DATE: 11 Oct. 1974

SUBJECT INTERNAL SECURITY: MONTHLY REPORT OF INCIDENTS OF POLITICAL VIOLENCE, September 1974

REF

SUMMARY: There was a slight drop in press-reported incidents of a possible political nature during September. The number of attributed incidents increased sharply, however, primarily because of commemoration of the PGT's 25th anniversary, and because of discovery of a clandestine Escuadron de la Muerte cemetery dating from the Arana administration. Subversive elements may have carried out a joint rescue operation to free two hospitalized colleagues. Violence in Escuintla Department increased sharply. END SUMMARY.

I. Statistics: The 49 incidents of a possible political nature reported by the press in September were a slight decrease from the August level of 51 incidents. In contrast with August, however, the percentage of incidents which could be attributed to either side was quite high - 57% in September as opposed to only 12% in August. Of these incidents, fifteen can be charged to the GOG or rightist political elements, while 12 can be attributed to leftist subversives. The total number of victims this month was somewhat skewed by the discovery of a clandestine cemetery dating from the Arana administration. The percentage of incidents originating on the South Coast continued to be disproportionately high, while the percentage of incidents occurring in Guatemala Department (39%) remained virtually unchanged. September's victims included the brother of the 1974 DCG presidential candidate, the chief of data processing at the

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Classified by:

POL:DCJohnson:jcp

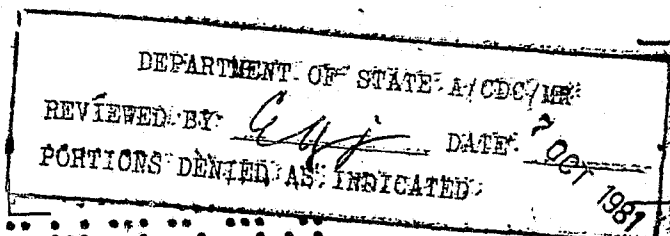
Contents and Classification Approved by:

Charge:GRAndrews

Clearances:

POL:GFJones (in draft)

POL-1:WThomas (in draft) DAO:Col.McTaggart (in draft) JET



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Economics Ministry, and ampesino union worker.

II. Attributed Incidents

To the Left: Two important anniversaries were celebrated by leftist forces in September - the 25th anniversary of the founding of the PGT, and the second anniversary of the disappearance of seven members of the PGT Central Committee. There was no bloodshed in the September celebrations, and much of the Left's activity was confined to the distribution of propaganda leaflets in Escuintla Department.

The most noteworthy commemorative action taken was the laying of a banner and wreath on top of the Topographic Map, a large relief map which is one of Guatemala City's most-visited attractions. The banner said "Youth pays homage to the revolutionary patriots and communists fallen during 25 years of fighting in the entire country," and it was in place for several hours before being removed.

Another action by the Left occurred September 15, Guatemala's Independence Day. A homemade leaflet bomb exploded during late-night festivities in the Central Square, shortly after the official independence celebration had begun. The incident was a daring one because the entire square was swarming with policemen and soldiers.

Probably the most significant incident was the September 20 assault on a Mazatenango hospital and the seizure of two patients who were undergoing treatment for injuries suffered in an auto accident. Police had been assigned to guard the pair at the hospital after weapons were found concealed in their automobile, but these policemen were overwhelmed by the assault group, which was armed with machineguns, without a shot being fired.

Comment: According to [REDACTED] believes that both the attackers and the patients they seized belonged to subversive groups. The attack on the hospital would therefore have to be classified as a rescue operation. Assuming [REDACTED] is correct, the September incidents can only underscore the fact that the radical Left still possesses sufficient organization, armament, and courage to carry out those actions it deems worthwhile or necessary.

End Comment.

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To the Right: Workers cutting weeds along the side of the Mixco-to-Antigua road accidentally discovered a clandestine cemetery containing seven skeletons. Police claimed that identification of the remains was impossible, and the men were buried as unknowns. On September 15, ten days after the bodies were discovered, newspapers, quoting police sources, said that pieces of paper linking the cemetery to the Escuadron de la Muerte had been discovered along with the skeletons.

Comment: Official statements concerning the discovery stressed the fact that the skeletons had been in the cemetery for at least three months, an oblique way of saying that the cemetery dated from the Arana administration. End Comment. /

Julio Dagoberto Rios Montt, 41-year-old brother of 1974 DCG presidential candidate General Efraim Rios Montt, was murdered near the village of Cruz del Valle, El Progreso Department, on September 18. The assailants allegedly were an MLN auxiliary mayor of the village and his brothers, who had tried unsuccessfully to have Rios Montt removed from his post as local schoolteacher prior to the March elections. The local military commander refused to allow notification of other Rios Montt family members until after Rios Montt had been buried locally, because he feared a full-blown political funeral in the capital.

Comment: The swift identification and apprehension of at least some of the alleged culprits appeared to indicate that the GOG desired a neat and swift resolution of the crime, to prevent its becoming a political issue. End Comment.

Atanacio Coy, a leader of a local CNT-affiliated campesino union in Chimaltenango, was reported kidnapped on September 25. On September 26, police reported that Coy was being held on criminal charges of extortion and threats to murder. The charges were pressed by a relative of a prominent MLN member. On October 1, ninety members of various campesino groups came to Guatemala City headquarters of the CNT to protest the treatment they had been receiving at the hands of local officials.

Comment:

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III. Other Incidents: The murders of an Escuintla taxi-driver, a member of the Escuintla City Council, and the chief of police in Tiquisate gave Escuintla Department the dubious distinction of most violent area during the month of September. The taxi driver, Felix Lopez y Lopez, was found tied hand and foot, with signs of torture, four days after being kidnapped from his Escuintla taxi stand. The city councilman, Julio Ponciano Zamora, was reportedly machinegunned by men who later escaped to the hills. Juan Ramirez Galindo, Tiquisate police chief, was shot five times in the back by an assailant who managed to escape.

In addition to the murders, the Escuintla Ministerio Publico was attacked by several men who wounded the policeman on duty and then escaped.

Comment: The upsurge of violence in the Escuintla area has not as yet resulted in any major government action designed to suppress it. If the subversive pamphleteering and political violence continue, or are found to be linked, then the government will probably feel compelled to increase its security effort in the region. End Comment.

GRJA
ANDREWS

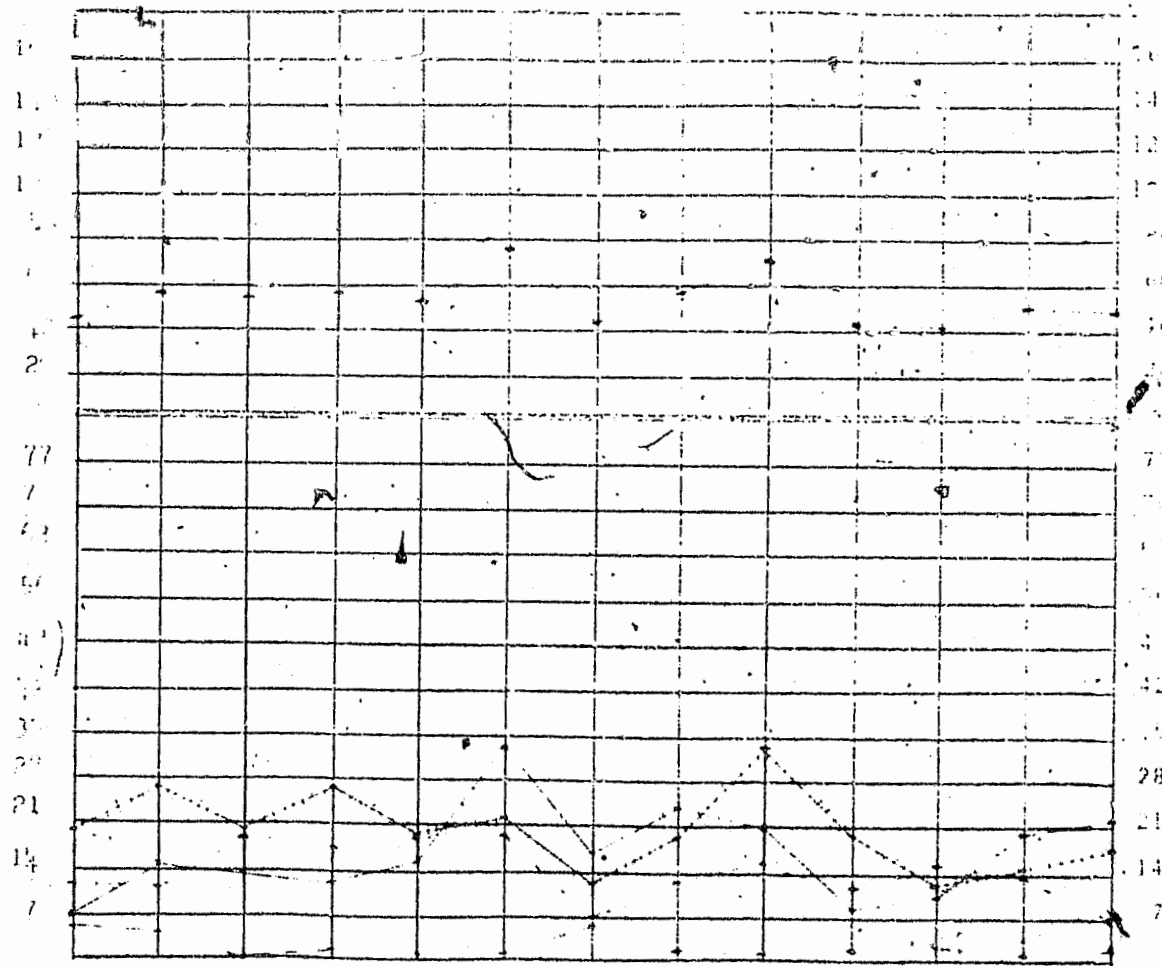
CLASSIFIED BY George R. Andrews
EXEMPT FROM GDS OF EO 11652
EXEMPTION CATEGORY 5B (2)

Encl: Monthly Frequency of
Political Incidents
by Region

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Guatemala, 1962 H/111 Enclosure



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For purposes of this graph, acts of violence include shootings, bombings, and deaths, all of which appear to be politically motivated.

Capital area - Sacatepequez, Guatemala.

South Coast - San Marcos, Quezaltenango, Retalhuleu, Suchitepequez, Escuintla, Santa Rosa.

Eastern Region - Juliapa, El Progreso, Jalapa, Zacapa, Chiquirula, Izamal, El Peten.

Highlands - Totonicapan, Chimaltenango, Huehuetenango, El Quiche, Baja Verapaz, Alta Verapaz.